



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
August 4, 2014

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Board of Education met on Monday, August 4, 2014, at the W. Alton Jones Whispering Pines Conference Center. Chair Eva-Marie Mancuso welcomed everyone, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Attendance was as follows:

Antonio Barajas: present
Michael Bernstein: present
Colleen Callahan: present
Karin Forbes: present
Jo Eva Gaines: present
Patrick Guida: present
Constance Howes: present
Thomas Izzo: present
Eva-Marie Mancuso: present
Judy Ouellette: present
Lawrence Purtill: present
Kerry Rafanelli: present
Mathies Santos: present
John Smith: present
Joyce Stevos: present
Jeffery Williams: present

Amy Beretta arrived at 5:37 p.m.

Dennis Duffy arrived at 5:49 p.m.

Chair Mancuso thanked President Dooley, his staff, and the staff at Alton Jones for hosting this evening's meeting.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Colleen Callahan it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of August 4, 2014.

Vote: 15 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Patrick Guida, Thomas Izzo, Judy Ouellette, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, Mathies Santos, John Smith, Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2a. Minutes of the June 12, 2014, Work Session

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the work session of June 12, 2014.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

NAYS: 0

2b. Minutes of the June 12, 2014, Executive Session

On a motion duly made by Karin Forbes and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the Executive Session of June 12, 2014.

Vote: 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos

NAYS: 0

2c. Minutes of the June 16, 2014, Meeting

Board Member Santos asked that the minutes of the June 16, 2014, meeting be amended to clarify that it was Board Member Duffy and not Board Member Maaia who voted in opposition of the recommendation (enc8k – New Classification: Director, Recruitment & Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff [Pay Grade 14]) to amend the Personnel Review Committee recommendation on the new classification of Director, Recruitment & Retention of Diverse Faculty & Staff (Pay Grade 14) on behalf of the University of Rhode Island, such that it be reviewed in one year to see if it has been of quality, met its objectives, and improved diversity.

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Patrick Guida, it was

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| VOTED: | That | the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the meeting of June 16, 2014, as amended |
| | Vote: | 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows: |
| | YEAS: | Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos |
| | NAYS: | 0 |

[Amy Beretta joins the meeting at 5:37]

2d. Minutes of the June 16, 2014, Executive Session

On a motion duly made by Patrick Guida and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

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| VOTED: | That | the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the minutes of the executive session of June 16, 2014. |
| | Vote: | 9 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows: |
| | YEAS: | Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Michael Bernstein, Colleen A. Callahan, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Patrick Guida, Lawrence Purtill, and Mathies Santos |
| | NAYS: | 0 |

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Mancuso reminded everyone wishing to address the Board that they would be limited to two minutes per person. The following individual spoke:

- Melissa Lorenzo – Segue Institute for Learning – Spoke about the different reforms going on at the Segue Institute for Learning and also extended an invitation to the full Board to join Segue’s staff at the leaders’ luncheon being held on Friday, August 15th.

4. WELCOME REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE R.I. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chair Mancuso began by welcoming and thanking Constance (Connie) Howes, Chair of the Governor’s Workforce Board, who, by legislation, now joins the Board of Education as a non-voting, ex-officio member.

Also, by legislation, the Chair of the R.I. Commerce Corporation, Governor Chafee, serves as a non-voting, ex-officio member. He could not make it this evening, but asked Chair Mancuso to distribute a citation on his behalf thanking everyone for taking on the obligation of serving on the R.I. Board of Education.

She went on to give a brief overview of the evening’s agendas – Board of Education Orientation, Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, and Council on Postsecondary Education.

[Dennis Duffy joins the meeting at 5:49 p.m.]

She next asked everyone around the table to introduce themselves and share a fact about them that would not be found on Google.

5. LEGAL PRESENTATION ON BOARD OF EDUCATION STRUCTURE

As the Board’s first order of business, Chair Mancuso introduced David Abbott, Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel for the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, who gave a legal presentation on the Board of Education’s legal structure.

Deputy Commissioner Abbott began by walking Board members through a couple of enclosures on the high points of Article 20, the budget article that re-created the Board of Education, and a six-page summary of Article 20 that was prepared by RIDE.

He highlighted a few of the high points of Article 20. What the legislation effectively does is create two Councils, each as a corporate entity, which means that they can sue and be sued in their own name. The umbrella body, the Board of Education, is not a corporate entity, so a great deal of the work that is specific to elementary and secondary education or postsecondary education will be done by the two Councils. Membership on the Board of Education is a prerequisite to being a member of either Council. The full Board is split into two Councils, 8 and 8, and the Chair of the Board sits on both Councils as an ex-officio, voting member. There are some key differences and many more similarities. He highlighted the budget function as the responsibility of the full Board, as are all items that carry over for both Elementary and Secondary and Postsecondary Education. The full Board is the umbrella body that covers everything that is more universal to the entire education system. In addition to approving each Council's budget, the full Board is also responsible for the long-term planning, both financial and strategic, of the entire education system.

On the postsecondary side, title to all state properties vests in the Council for Postsecondary Education, no longer in the Board as a whole. The Council is the employer of record for all employees in all of the institutions of postsecondary education as well as the Commissioner of Postsecondary Office.

On the Elementary and Secondary Education side, it is a bit more complicated, where the Council is not the employer of record, as the Commissioner sits as what is called the Personnel Board and has control over virtually all that gets negotiated (salaries, promotions, working conditions), as most of the employees on the elementary and secondary side are actually municipal employees. The Council does play some critical functions, such as selecting and appointing the Commissioner, with the approval of the entire Board, and appointing any associate commissioners, approving the table of organization, and approving the executive pay plan or the pay ranges for the non-classified employees of RIDE.

It is the responsibility of both Councils to create short-term strategic plans that have to adhere to the long-term strategic mission of the Board. The full Board sets the strategic direction for the state and then each Council fills in the specifics and the logistics in a way that is consistent with the direction that it sets as a whole body.

The descriptions of the authorities of the Presidents of the three institutions of postsecondary education have significantly changed, as there are some responsibilities that were formerly the responsibility of the Commissioner of Higher Education that have been delegated to the Presidents. For example, control over campus property is now largely vested in the Presidents. Several of the reporting requirements, especially around affirmative action, have also been delegated to the Presidents.

As with any new piece of legislation, there are gaps that will need to be filled in, such as how the strategic planning will work, what is the sequence, and so on. There are also two budgets, not a single one. The full Board approves each budget, and that approval needs to occur before those budgets can be submitted to the State Budget Office.

6. ORIENTATION – Overview of Education in Rhode Island

Commissioner Gist began by congratulating the Chairs of the two Councils and the new and returning members on their appointments, and she looks forward to working with them. Although there are lots of challenges in our state, she reported, there are so many opportunities and many bright days ahead as we work toward the goal of having the best education system in the country.

She went on to give a high-level overview of Rhode Island's K-12 public education system, including basic data on schools, teachers, and students. She also presented on recent assessment scores and the improvements that have been made over time on student achievement and graduation rates, and she highlighted some of the accomplishments achieved over recent years.

Next, Chair Mancuso introduced the newly appointed Commissioner of the Office of Postsecondary Education, Jim Purcell, who gave an overview of the postsecondary system. He began by sharing economic data and stressing how Rhode Island needs the density of educated skilled workers for the jobs that are available. Rhode Island certainly has the density, but everyone in this room, he noted, needs to work to ensure that we have skilled workers. Most important, students need access to good schools, colleges, universities and hospitals; the involvement of local leaders; and a plan that is based on regional economic development. Local entities need to ensure that their communities are successful, as businesses are going to be looking for communities that are work-ready.

Next, he shared national data on high-demand jobs and the level of skills necessary to fill them. Although Rhode Island is not in the top tier, Massachusetts, which is next door to us, is, so there is great opportunity for us to grow and be very successful if we keep our eye on the prize. Unlike a few decades ago, 60 percent of today's jobs require some type of postsecondary credential. Rhode Island has many assets, but we need to make sure that workers have the necessary skills and we should tap into the research done within our institutions of higher education to help address the need. Rhode Island needs to enhance the production of degrees in high-demand programs and to give students the incentives to complete a degree and stay in Rhode Island. The good news about such a change is that all of the New England states are in the same place, so there is opportunity for great progress very quickly.

Commissioner Purcell ended his presentation by highlighting that Rhode Island lags behind the rest of the nation in state support for higher education, where 70 percent of support comes from families and students, compared with 50 percent in other states. Changes need to occur in order for us to have a commitment to businesses and industries looking to come into the state. He gave kudos to Governor Chafee and the Legislature for their increase in funding for higher education over the last three years and for understanding the need to have higher education be significant in this state.

Next, the Presidents of the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island gave brief presentations on the basic characteristics and facts of their institutions.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Dual Enrollment Policy

Commissioner Gist began by sharing how excited she is about engaging in an ideal partnership area with the Office of Postsecondary Education on the topic of dual enrollment, a legislatively mandated policy prescribed by the Dual Enrollment Equal Opportunity Act of 2013.

RIDE and postsecondary education have partnered to create a work group to develop recommendations on how to increase dual enrollment access for Rhode Island students.

The workgroup included key leaders from each of the state's public institutions of postsecondary education, school-district superintendents, and teachers.

The recommendations establish a set of key priorities and they outline recommendations that will serve as a guide to postsecondary education and RIDE as they develop regulations to ensure all of Rhode Island's high-school students are provided access to dual-enrollment programming for the 2015-16 school year.

Many Rhode Island high-school students currently have access to dual enrollment at the state's institutions of postsecondary education; what is lacking is systemically across the state, consistent opportunities and clear guidelines for credits and transferring of credits.

Commissioner Gist and Commissioner Purcell will be working on a draft regulation, which will be discussed at each Council's individual work sessions or meetings, and the Board of Education will be asked to approve the draft policy, for the purpose of public review and comment, at its next quarterly meeting, in December.

Before turning the presentation over to Stephen Osborn, RIDE's Chief of Accelerating School Performance, Commissioner Gist asked Postsecondary Commissioner Purcell to share some of his experiences with dual enrollment in other states that he has worked in and his vision for the opportunity of dual enrollment in Rhode Island.

Commissioner Purcell began by stating that the big thing that dual enrollment can do is let students know at a very young age that they can actually do college-level work.

He was fortunate to work in Arkansas and Louisiana, states that had pretty robust dual-enrollment initiatives, and there is lots of literature on experiences in other states that can help Rhode Island can make sure that ours is a good initiative for the high schools and the institutions of higher education. He is very excited about this work and looks forward to working with Board members to ensure that they are prepared to make a decision at their December meeting.

Chair Mancuso asked why the policy had to go out for public review and comment and not just an act of the Board, to which Commissioner Gist answered that it's because it is a regulation.

Commissioner Gist wanted to add one last thing, in that many of the dual-enrollment opportunities that are currently in existence tend to be for students who are academically successful or advanced; however, it is a known fact that dual-enrollment opportunities are really important for those students who may not be where they need to be academically or who may be the first in their family to go to college. Having that experience can show them, that, yes, they, too, can go to college and take these classes.

With that, Commissioner Gist turned the conversation over to Stephen Osborn, who walked the Board through a PowerPoint presentation overview on the current status of the Dual Enrollment Equal Opportunity Act and the next steps for implementation of the Act by all high schools in the state by June 30, 2015. He also answered questions from Board members about the intent of the legislation, workgroup membership, qualifications of teachers who provide dual-enrollment instruction at the high-school level, strategies for funding dual enrollment, and future opportunities for Board members to provide feedback.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made Patrick Guida and seconded by Karin Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Eva-Marie Mancuso, Antonio Barajas, Amy Beretta,
Michael Bernstein, Colleen Callahan, Dennis Duffy,
Karin Forbes,
Jo Eva Gaines, Patrick Guida, Thomas Izzo, Judy
Ouellette, Lawrence Purtill, Kerry Rafanelli, Mathies
Santos, John Smith, Joyce Stevos, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.